

FOI DOF/2026-0551

Request and clarification.

I would like to request copies of the most recent business cases for the following spend...

Stationery
Waste disposal
Term Service ... ie estate and facilities maintenance
Rates
Utilities - oil, gas and electricity
Cleaning
Microsoft licensing
Purchase of computers and associated hardware
Photocopier managed services
Uniforms
Catering provision ... including vending
Vehicle parts
Vehicle maintenance
Vehicle fuel
Access NI checks
Grounds maintenance

Please advise which departments or locations are covered by these business cases ... for example, is this for a framework contract covering all NICS Departments and ALBs or is it specific to DoF and it's ALBs.

If there is no business cases for any in the list, please advise why they are not considered to be required or have not been produced and on what basis there is approval to spend.

Clarification.

▪The most recent business cases – can you clarify if you mean the current financial year or do you mean the last time a relevant business case was produced no matter the year?

Can you please provide the business case that includes the current FY. If there is no business case that covers the current year, please provide the latest completed business case and provide the explanation for why there is no case that covers the current FY for what is essentially BAU spend.

- Can you confirm if you are seeking copies of the completed £5k or less business case templates relating to all expenditure listed in their request?

I do not require these at this time, unless they are the only cases covering this year. In those cases, I would like an explanation as to why this under £5k is the only BC when spend across a standard BC 5 year period would be significantly higher.

- Can you clarify what information you are seeking for Purchase of computers and associated hardware?

By associated hardware, I mean peripherals such as screens, keyboards and mice - items that would normally be covered as dependent requirements in any business case of this nature. Computers includes desktops and laptops as well as tablets or other equivalent equipment.

- Can you clarify in relation to Uniforms what information you are seeking?

I am seeking a business case for the purchase of clothing or PPE that staff have the option to wear or are mandated to wear. This can include outer wear and standard type uniform such as trousers, skirts, shirts etc.

Response

I can confirm the Department of Finance holds some of the information requested. The Department estimates that providing the information requested would take more than 28 hours.

The Department of Finance is unable to provide this information as it considers this to exceed the fees threshold. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act, the Department has estimated that the cost of complying with your request is £700.00. This exceeds the appropriate limit of £600 as set out in the Fees Regulations.

You may wish to refine your request by providing a specific timeframe for your request, for example seeking only those cases completed in the current financial year. In addition, by reducing the number of Business cases requested to specific areas may reduce the number of hours it takes the Department to respond.

However, even if your request is narrowed, some of the requested information may still not be considered suitable for release to you e.g. if it is considered exempt under any provision of the Act such as (commercially sensitive information or third party personal data).

Annex B - Internal Reviews

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state:** That you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.

- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.